1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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556 769 a man and assuage his sorrow to know that he has shown fitting respect to the dead, there is also a gain in social prestige. As the whole community respects, admires, and sometimes envies a man for having carried out a memorial potlatch, there is no doubt that he is pleased and gratified to such an extent that his grief is dulled. These two factors must constantly be kept in mind; memorial potlatches serve to commemorate the dead, but in so doing they add to the social importance of the donors. The two combine to bring considerable comfort to the chief who has lost a dear relative. In some cases the social prestige is the real motive, the grief assumed and unimportant; but in others the latter is the only factor that matters, and a chief is entirely oblivious to any increase in his own status. In most memorial potlatches, both feelings are present in the mind of the donor, and both are gratified.

DETAILED ACCOUNT OF A FUNERAL

764 114 In the preceding pages, an attempt has been made to describe the traditional death rites of the Bella Coola. The following section comprises a detailed account of funeral ceremonies witnessed in 1922. The contrast between these and the ones already recorded, will indicate some of the changes [178] in custom which are of such importance in studies of cultural [182] growth or decline. The following description will also serve [57] to demonstrate a point repeatedly mentioned, the manner in which business transactions and arrangements of all kinds take place whenever the people have been called together.

[123] On June 27, 1922, the death occurred in Bella Coola of Jessie, Mrs. Samuel King, daughter of Captain Schooner. The latter, now deceased, was one of the writer's most trusted friends, and as a result of this friendship it was possible not only to attend the actual rites, but to ascertain much of the feeling underlying them. This advantage had its drawbacks, since it was manifestly impossible to question either the father or the husband of the woman too closely. The details will be de-

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* 575 sticks, while everyone calls out, *hoip*. This is repeated four
* 796 times. The sticks continue to sound irregularly as the younger
men pull the enclosure to pieces and throw it on the central fire.
[787] By these means the *kukusiut* have been freed from their contact with the supernatural and, perhaps even more important, the repositories have been "tied up," to use the native term, for another year. Those members of the society whose dances have taken place in the house now wash the black from their faces and all share a light meal. The marshals take this last opportunity of addressing their fellows, impressing on them the necessity of maintaining the secrecy of the rites during the summer season. Above all, they warn them to hide the whistles and other paraphernalia most carefully. This concludes the season's ceremony in the house in question; some of the *kukusiut* withdraw, others remain, and the uninitiated are free to enter and take up the old threads of family life, as it was before the coming of the first call.

If it is not too late at night the party may move to a second house and remove the taboo from it in the same way. More often this is done on the following night, when a second body of *kukusiut* are allowed to wash. Another house is visited on the next evening, and so on in succession till all the enclosures are burnt and the only visible mark of what has happened is the collar of dyed cedar-bark worn by each novice.

[424] There may be certain prerogatives connected with this finale which could not be learnt owing to its discontinuance for many years. In fact, one old woman claimed to have a definite right to sing at the destruction of the enclosures, but it was unfortunately impossible to investigate the matter.

* 575 ### Concluding Observations and History

* 796 It is virtually impossible to overestimate the importance
182 of the sociological aspects of the society. During the ceremonial season the whole fabric of social life is altered; families
● 571 are divided, parents and children being separated in many

2; McIlwraith E-S (1922-1924) 1948
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cases though an infant in arms, though uninitiated, can be brought to dances by its mother; distinctions between rich and poor, slave and freeman, become of slight importance; all that really matters is whether a person is or is not a *kusiut*. Membership in the society seems to the uninitiated the most desirable thing in life, although their fears are always so strong that they never cease to dread actual admission. The feeling of class consciousness which exists in a somewhat mild form at other seasons of the year, gives place to a powerful sentiment of superiority on the part of members of the society over those who are not so fortunate. Even the respect normally shown to chiefs is submerged since they, too, are subject to the rule of the marshals.

Apart entirely from this attitude of superiority and inferiority, is the bond of fellowship engendered among members of the society by the rites. Whatever happens, the uninitiated *must* be deceived. Moreover, the psychological effect of gathering nightly in a body for a specific purpose is tremendous. Night after night they eat together; night after night they listen to the words of the marshals, who impress on them the need for co-operation and secrecy, who hold before them the good example set by their fellows who have carried out rites successfully, who emphasize the fact that they are doing as their fathers did. The ceremonial import is of greatest consequence at all these gatherings, but when the uninitiated have withdrawn the *kukusiut* relax somewhat and enjoy themselves. The food itself is always of the best and some of the usual restrictions are removed. It is, for example, the only time that women are allowed to eat the flesh of seals. If this delicacy is provided the marshals enjoy the tidbits, but after Cannibals, novices, and others have received preferential treatment, the remainder is distributed to all and sundry.

It has been stated by some writers, especially those unfamiliar with the significance of native ceremonial life, that the dances of the coastal tribes are orgies of immorality. This point was investigated with care and it may be stated posi-

1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
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since each fisherman provided one when his box was filled.

No one is allowed to drink water immediately after eating the first olachen of the spring, since to do so would cause a flood. It is considered most improper for a child to cry soon after partaking of this food; if he does so, he is quieted by having nettles stuffed into his mouth. As already described, if a person dies before the first fish have passed through his bowels, a shaman must wipe his lips with cedar-bark.

After the first meal of olachen, stakes for the nets can be driven, and the restrictions become less exacting. Women are not allowed to assist in fishing, but the men devote their full time to the task, working with zest and energy.[1] An abundant supply of olachen is a source of joy, and all listen eagerly for the singing of the thrush, *smixmixaxls*, which signifies that the nets are full to bursting. Half jocularly, people invite the bird to come and eat, but his melody is interpreted as:

"I shall eat when the river is full."

RITES CONNECTED WITH THE FIRST SPRING SALMON[2]

Salmon is the most important article of Bella Coola diet and the rites which accompany the earliest taking of the fish are relatively complicated.

When the first spring salmon have been caught, they are laid in the canoe with their heads all pointing eastward, upstream. The fisherman poles to shore, but instead of landing his catch, he fastens the salmon to a stake driven at the edge of the bank so that they remain in the water. A number of posts are usually placed in readiness, each decorated with alternate spirals of dyed and undyed cedar-bark and crowned with an eagle's tail. Each day one or two more fish may be caught, but all are left in the water until the first have become soft, thus giving sufficient time for the necessary preparations on shore. It is the duty of every owner of a salmon-weir to build near its end a so-called Spring Salmon House, a shed-like

[1] For a description of olachen fishing, see Appendix A.
[2] Cf. Boas, p. 78.

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
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women listening from the village are able to tell how many have been caught from the number of times the cry *xak'loi* is raised. 226 796

Then the salmon are cut up (only shell knives may be used for the purpose) and cooked. Everything must be used, heads, bones, and entrails, the only refuse being the blood which is scraped from the leaves and carried into the woods. The leaves themselves, and the strings of dyed and undyed cedar-bark are thrown into the river in accordance with a desire expressed by *Nēākxmm* long ago. When everything is ready for a meal, the men take their places in two rows, facing each other across a coarse bark mat. Bark spoons have been provided, and when the heralds call for food, the fisherman brings the heads of the salmon and the guests make the motions of eating, though in reality these parts are dried and kept for winter. Boxes containing a liberal portion of the choice meat are next served and all eat freely. Each guest puts on one side what he has not consumed as if to carry it away, as is the custom at an ordinary feast, though his share is really left in the shelter until the following day. Finally, a third course is provided, the back of the fish cooked with the bone in position. Like the last, the guests eat as much as they desire and pack up the residue as if to take away. Then they leave the Spring Salmon House. [412] 226 796 574 [251]

All the fish are not cooked on the one occasion. The following day the fisherman again calls back the men of his village. The same type of meal is served, but this time the guests carry away what they do not eat for the benefit of their families. This portion may be eaten by the women without affronting the salmon. [562]

This rite has not been performed in full detail in Bella Coola for many years, and it was impossible to collect information on some points. It is uncertain, for example, whether this ceremony was carried out by every fisherman or whether there used to be certain individuals with the prerogative of dealing with the first catch. The latter appears to be the most logical 226 796 424

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manner, and was definitely stated to be the case by one well-informed old man. It is clear, however, that every spring salmon was landed with the cry of *xaẖ'loi·*, taken to the Spring Salmon House, and cut up by the men until the time when women were allowed near the river. Another old man stated that the feast took place at night and that only the heads and refuse of the first catch were eaten, the remainder being dried for the winter. Women of child-bearing age were not allowed on the river bank, and were rigorously excluded from the Spring Salmon House until the time when the sun's shadow reached a diagonal scar on the slope of one of the mountains on the north side of North Bentinck Arm. This occurs about August. From that time onwards, there was no calling of *xaẖ'loi·*, and women, except those who were taboo, could cut salmon freely on the bank. It was even stated that refuse of salmon could be thrown into the river after that time. No one knows the origin of this seasonal prohibition, or why it should end when the sun reaches a certain point, but it was faithfully observed in former times.

In Kimsquit similar rites were carried out, the chief variation being that the bodies of four swans were placed in the Spring Salmon House and the fish laid with these at intervals in the line. Moreover, the youth used to bite the back of each salmon as he presented it with the cedar-bark streamer. The same regulations with regard to drinking water, and crying after eating, were enforced for spring salmon as for olachen.

Miscellaneous Beliefs

The following miscellaneous beliefs and customs cannot be assigned to any special aspect of Bella Coola life:

If a spark from a fire jumps out and lights on a person's hand, it is said:

"The fire wants to give you [the person on whom the brand has fallen] food."

If a man sneezes repeatedly, it is said:

2:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
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[The Dance of NoaKxnim] -

of his relatives, has given them for this purpose. When he crouches during the chorus they crowd close around, almost concealing him. Particularly in those dances fraught with danger to the performer, it is customary for any number of his friends, either men or women, to dance to "help" him. Anyone wishing to do so merely stands up and begins, in time to the music, irrespective of what part of the house he may be in. It is considered contrary to good manners for a father so to help his son, or a brother a brother, but a dancer is pleased to have aid from anyone else. It is said that in Bella Bella certain *kukusiut* have definite prerogatives of helping in this way, but this is not the case in Bella Coola. Throughout every dance the *kukusiut* women utter their droning cry.

This, then, is the type of dance which the uninitiated in the lowest house see. They hear the song, too, and gaze with awe at X, imbued as he is with the supernatural power of sight. Then the sounding-boards are picked up and taken to the next house, where the whole ceremonial is repeated. This is done at each house of the village.[11] All the *kukusiut* now return to X's house, where he once more dances to his song. A box-drum is always used to help the singers in keeping time, and when the song has been finished two men continue in turn to beat it all day. X always arranges to have a relative or friend superintend the distribution of food, which follows his final dancing. As the *kukusiut* are eating, the marshals deliver their usual admonishments, a task that accompanies every meal. Then they call on the people to erect a raised platform between the fire and the back-wall of the house. Materials have been placed in readiness so that it is an easy matter to build a framework a few feet in height, of which the flat top is screened by a matting wall about three feet high. This is often decorated with designs of dyed cedar-bark without ritual significance as far as the Bella Coola of today are aware. X climbs to this platform, the *kukusiut* disperse, and only the incessant pounding of the drum proves that some unusual event is taking place.

[11] In Bella Coola, but perhaps not in Kimsquit.

575* 796× 535 [543] [171] [533] 575* 796× [534] [574] [531] [184]

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This ejaculation is supposed to make the work of manufacture less difficult. The same procedure is repeated with every mask ordered, except that if the being to be represented is a woman, X's ejaculation is *i* ..... Any *kusiut* can make a mask, but the preference is always given to a man who has shown ability in previous tasks. The carpenters endeavour to follow well-recognized designs for many representations, but a great deal of latitude is allowed, and a workman receives greater praise and fame for turning out a fine and distinctive piece of new design, than for rigid adherence to a former type. This, combined with the burning of masks and consequent loss of permanent patterns, is responsible for the variability in Bella Coola forms, and the difficulty which they themselves experience in recognizing portrayed beings.

As soon as all the carpentry has been allotted, the singers strike up one of X's eight songs. Whether or not he dances to them is a matter about which there is a difference of opinion among informants. In any case the re-singing on *nusiutälsap* is purely for rehearsal, made necessary by the large number of songs. Later on in the *kusiut* season, the songs of other dancers may be practised on this night, and if the owners wish to practice their steps, it is quite proper for them to do so. Finally, a meal is distributed, while the marshals discourse in the usual way. Feasts are features of all *kusiut* dances, and the food distributed is regarded as a free-will gift, without thought of repayment. After eating, the *kukusiut* disperse; X must sleep within his own house, but no longer remains within his platform-enclosure.

The next day, the twenty-sixth of the ceremony, is *qothm*. Early in the morning a herald summons to X's house, where the blocks have been left, all those to whom work has been assigned. All morning they carve diligently. The speed with which masks are completed is surprising, although this has undoubtedly increased since the introduction of metal tools. In the middle of the day a few *kukusiut* men, no women, are invited to share "the carpenters' meal," as the food provided

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[The Stomach-Cutting Dance]

supposed to have taught them, he appears, supported by two *kukusiut*, and attempts to dance, but is too feeble to do more than be assisted around the fire, feebly shaking his hands. He retires, but comes forth once more as the singers beat out the song of regular *kusiut* type composed for him and which his fellows have practised. If two have been composed, he appears a third time. After X has finally withdrawn, the ritual proceeds in the usual manner, by the dancing of every *kusiut* who has had a call in time to his two songs. It is late before all have danced; then the uninitiated are given a little food and sent away. The *kukusiut* eat more leisurely, and listen to the admonitions of the marshals. On account of the solemnity of the occasion, their words of wisdom are even more grandiloquent than usual. The following may be regarded as a typical address:

"You have done well, ye *kukusiut*, in thus carrying out the ceremony so admirably. I thank you. You have done well X, you have done as our fathers did. None of you must ever forget the precepts and example of our fathers who have handed down this rite from dim antiquity. Perhaps when we marshals are dead some of you will become careless and want to alter the ceremonial. Do not dream of anything so foolish. The proper method is that which you have just seen. Try no other."

When the marshals have finished, X dances once again, and the weary *kukusiut* at length disperse.

The next day, or rather later in the same day, for it is long after midnight before the ceremony is completed, is *nebusam*. Many of the *kukusiut* assemble in X's house about four o'clock in the afternoon to try on the masks and attend to the innumerable details. A representation of *Ăno'likwolsaix* is always prepared, as well as those of *Ălquntăm*, *Sexsexălaix*, and *Snustkăls*. The last-named is the "Wise One," "He of Whom Questions are Asked," the supernatural being who decides points of ritual in the dances in the land above. No paint is used on his mask, but a coloured effect is obtained by means

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[The Mystery Dance]

This is such an important occasion that leading *kukusiut* from neighbouring towns are often invited to be present. If this is to be done, heralds are sent for the purpose during the following day.

Next evening the *kukusiut* are invited to X's house in the usual manner, many of them unaware that the answer is soon to be given. The customary ritual is carried out and the uninitiated summoned in due course. By this time X is supposed to have been weakened by his long fast, and to give colour to that claim, two assistants support him as he totters feebly to and fro in his enclosure. Instead of waving his stick horizontally above his head, X now rests his weight on it, with his helpers holding the ends. After the customary frenzied beating with sticks, X again invites guesses, but still no one can find the three answers. Meanwhile the father or some elderly friend of the youth chosen to guess correctly, slips down to where he is sitting and whispers to him to try, for example, *Aimaltua*. The youth timidly does so, and at once X begins to shake violently, and calls frantically:

"More! More!"

In Kimsquit, though not in Bella Coola, the long drawn-out whistling of *Snitsmān·a* is heard, though of course the uninitiated do not know that four *kukusiut* have been sent out for this purpose. The excitement becomes intense.

The man who is prompting the successful guesser whispers to him the second answer. The young man calls it out and X becomes more and more excited, shaking wildly and shouting:

"More! More! You mortal."

Finally the third answer is given. In Bella Coola the dancer leaps high in the air from his enclosure and falls to the ground beneath as if dead. *Saignās* of Kimsquit, on the other hand, whose patron is the wild *Kokoɬxum*, becomes frenzied, breaks his stick and enclosure and acts like a raging, though feeble, lunatic. Irrespective of X's behaviour, the marshals ask the uninitiated to withdraw, and the growling Cannibals add point to the request. It is at this juncture in Bella Coola

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killed, his reputation would only be increased by the manner of his death. At length *Ne-xwnkai* fired into the air; not until a shower of eagle down was blown forth did anyone realize that his musket had been loaded with nothing more deadly. This marked the establishment of friendly relations.

The Kitkatla had brought their own singers, who now began to beat out time for *Tcdxus* to perform a *xusok* dance. He was followed by several other chiefs, and then the strangers gave presents to influential Bella Coola on the most lavish scale. *Patlu* likewise performed a *xusok* dance, and bestowed gifts on the guests to validate it; such were, of course, not returnable. A meal was then served, and after that *Tcdxus* made a speech of which the gist was that the Bella Coola had previously known his achievements as a warrior, they now knew his nobility and bravery in risking his life, and that the name *Tcdxus* could never be forgotten, irrespective of his own fate.

Tcdxus left soon afterwards. It was somewhat difficult fully to comprehend his motive in thus risking his life. Undoubtedly his main object was to display his valour and disregard of danger. Moreover, it gave him an opportunity to impress these qualities upon the Bella Coola, and thus to exhibit his prowess actually within the enemy's camp, which must have been a source of tremendous gratification to him. The alleged motive, regret at killing a chief, may have been a contributory factor.

Although this visit was an intimation from *Tcdxus* that the Bella Coola need have no further fear of him, the suspicions of years could not be immediately allayed; in fact, an occasional skirmish still took place although *Tcdxus* himself refrained from fighting. A few years after his visit to Bella Coola, *Patlu* prepared to give a potlatch to which he determined to invite the northern chief. Many of the Bella Coola doubted whether the Kitkatla warriors would respect the safe-conduct usually afforded to envoys, and no one was anxious to bear the invitation. At length six chiefs volunteered for the task and set out, though with many misgivings. They stopped *en route* at Bella Bella where a chief of that tribe, *Omyu*, joined the party; he thought that he would have influence with the Kitkatla and might add protection to the Bella Coola. Fearing to be seen by any small Kitkatla bands, the delegation travelled only by night until they could actually reach *Tcdxus*'s village. As they paddled up, they indicated their mission by singing one of *Patlu*'s *xusok* songs. On hearing this, *Tcdxus* asked one of his Bella Coola slaves whose song it might be, and when he answered that it was one of *Patlu*'s, *Tcdxus* despatched a chief, *Kwinas*, to invite the guests to his house. *Omyu* was thankful when he saw this man approaching, since he felt that it heralded a friendly welcome. The party was conducted to *Tcdxus*'s

[i.e. to the peace negotiations - ANALYST]

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dwelling in spite of the fact that a Cannibal dance was taking place there. All the messengers were *hamats'a* in Bella Coola, while three had Bella Bella rights as well; *Tsɔ̀ɔ̀s* allowed the latter to take part in the ceremony while the former were treated as uninitiated. They were greatly interested in the details of the Kitkatla rites, which were exceedingly strict and included the eating of a corpse. At the conclusion, the envoys received their share of the small presents which were distributed.

At this juncture one of the envoys, *Xemxemálala*, fell seriously ill and was cured only through the attention and care of one of *Tsɔ̀ɔ̀s*'s wives. This delayed their departure so that it was a long time before they and the invited guests finally set out, much to the envy of two Bella Coola slaves who greatly desired to return home.

Meanwhile the long absence of the messengers had filled the Bella Coola with fear that they had been massacred, and there was great rejoicing when a large flotilla was seen approaching. The guests landed on the shore at *Xɔmpɔ́ɔ* where the customary ceremonious greetings were exchanged. Many of the Bella Coola, inflamed by ancient wrongs, endeavoured to break the canoes of the guests and in other ways to threaten them, but *Putlɔ́* finally succeeded in restraining them and establishing some kind of discipline. The ceremony that took place that night in the house of *Putlɔ́* is said to have been the most spectacular ever witnessed in Bella Coola. One old man who, as a mere lad, had attended, grew eloquent as he spoke of the lavish display. Unfortunately, he had had no part in the rites and could remember none of the details except that his childish mind was amazed at a dance in which a masked performer, representing a whale, vomited grease on the fire to give light. *Tsɔ̀ɔ̀s* did not return home immediately, but remained in Bella Coola until spring when the weather was more suitable for travelling.

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This exchange of hospitality virtually ended all hostility, although the Bella Coola and other tribes of the central coast still regard their northern neighbours with dislike and suspicion. Between 1880 and 1890 a party of Rivers Inlet people went to Kitlope to prepare olachen grease, for which purpose a number of Kitkatla had also camped there. Among them was *Tsɔ̀ɔ̀s*, a descendant of the warrior chief whose exploits have been recounted, and his nephew. One day the latter was gambling with *Afatsɔ́-a*, a Rivers Inlet youth who had recently been initiated into the *hamats'a* society and was consequently decorated with a cedar-bark collar. *Afatsɔ́-a*'s luck was amazing and some of the Kitkatla's friends asked him why he continued to play with a man who was clearly in such close contact with the supernatural that he could not lose. Heedless of this advice, *Tsɔ̀ɔ̀s*'s nephew continued until finally, losing his temper, he

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Alta: existing village.
Alta-ush, "He of the Tied-up Penis": Name given to a lad whose sex was disguised in infancy.
[426] *altamandut*: Refusal to lend to an outsider a family prerogative such as the employment of marriage dancers.
[574] *altaqulormam*: Meal served when a chief's fellow villagers are called in, preparatory to an announcement of his coming potlatch.
Altaiyumam: Name of a female shaman.
Altkul, "The Opening of the Sky":
1—One of the first men to settle at Kimsquit in the beginning of time.
2—One of the first men to settle at *Stuie* in the beginning of time.
3—Name of a *Snuiele'ut* chief.
Altkultalaia: *Kusiut* name of a Bella Coola man.
Altkumaihaia: One of the first men to settle at *Skitkiat* in the beginning of time.
[575] *altmuxmam*: *Xusiut* having the ability to enter the back-room and treat initiates concealed there. The function probably antedates the employment of *kai skikila*.
Altpaia: Holders, supernatural beings who restrain supernatural Cannibals.
[533] *altsxam*: Frenzied beating of sticks.
Alxmamaim: Wife of *Tsmisaiz*, the supernatural hunter.
Alxmaxkitsum: Supernatural calendrical experts.
Alxnaqkaikila: Husband of *Ana'itkmulaiz*; he is known only in Kimsquit.
[575] *alxnaxmk*: *Kusiut* dance of mystery.
[574] *alxsiwaxmam*: Visit paid to a sick person, especially the coming of foreign guests to a mourning ceremony.
[425] *alxsiwaxmmaqs*: Call used by heralds when summoning to a mourning ceremony.
[583] *alxsxmaiaiz*: The "Dragging Across" of a name, crest, or other intangible prerogative from wife to husband either at marriage or later at a repurchasing of the wife.
[262] *alxsxum*: To drag a heavy burden.
alxuslaxtx: Cranberries mixed with eulachon grease.
[821] *alxuxsim*: Visit to his repository by a *Suiut* initiate.
Amaxdimut, "Facing Both Ways": Second moon after the winter solstice.
Amlqaxmaq, "The Actionless Time": Hushed assemblage of the *Suiut* after departure of a Cannibal.
[597] *amskiskaw*: Adoption of a person resembling the deceased to replace the latter.
Amtalqaiaiaiz: 1—Supernatural being who revives mortals.
2—Name received by a shaman from this being.
amtx: Food.
[425] *amtxmam*, "Food Supplies": The term applied to the giving of the use of land at marriage.
Amtxtaut, "Stockaded": Village in the lower Bella Coola valley.
[156] *amtxtx*: Shaman's collar of dyed and undyed cedar-bark, arranged in alternate strands.
[882] *amtxuilt*: Guarded, term applied to a girl secluded at adolescence.
[825] *Amyaxyaxtx*: Supernatural name of eulachon, applied to those brought by the first people in the beginning of time.
Amyaxyaxtxut, "A Glance Downwards": Name given to an *Amtxtaut* man in the beginning of time.